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BARCELONA – Joint Meeting: ICANN Board and UASG  
Wednesday, October 24, 2018 – 17:00 to 18:00 CEST  
ICANN63 | Barcelona, Spain

RAM MOHAN:

May I invite everybody to come to the main table.

Welcome. This is the first meeting of the Board with the Universal Acceptance Steering Group. This is intended a briefing session from the UASG to the Board with the opportunity for dialogue and back and forth.

My name is Ram Mohan. I'm the SSAC's liaison to the Board for another 13 hours.

[ Laughter ]

But I'm also one of the people who got the UASG started and became chair of the UASG.

And what I thought we would do is before we actually got into the meat of the presentation, perhaps we just go around the room and take just a moment for folks --- and let me start with you, Akinori, and let's go around the room here.

AKINORI MAEMURA:

Thank you very much, ram. Akinori Maemura for the record, ICANN Board member. I am now the chair of the IDN working group at the ICANN board. And another aspect is one of the authors of the UASG (indiscernible) guide Japanese (indiscernible).

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**Note: The following is the output resulting from transcribing an audio file into a word/text document. Although the transcription is largely accurate, in some cases may be incomplete or inaccurate due to inaudible passages and grammatical corrections. It is posted as an aid to the original audio file, but should not be treated as an authoritative record.**

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RICH MERDINGER: Hello, everyone. Richard Merdinger with GoDaddy, (indiscernible) strategy. I was in the very first UASG meeting in D.C. back four years ago and have been earnestly involved with the program ever since.

It's important to me personally because as a North American, I'm all too aware that I don't engage culturally in a way that is native to the different cultures. As Americans speak English (indiscernible). From the GoDaddy perspective, it's very important as we continue to (indiscernible) across the world to be able to ensure that our products and services are used utilized effectively locally as well as nationally.

EDMON CHUNG: Edmon Chung from DotAsia. Working on universal acceptance since I started this IDN thing and EI thing back in the '90s. And I have been -- and helping with actually there has been discussions on and off all the way from the year 2000, 2001 all the way to this -- when this group was formed. So I'm hopeful still that we will one day get to a point where we are relatively universal.

TRIPTI SINHA: Tripti Sinha, incoming Board member, and I'm here just to observe.

MAARTEN BOTTERMAN: Maarten Botterman, on the Board as well.

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GEORGE SADOWSKY: George Sadowsky, ICANN Board for the next 14 hours until Ram and I ride off into the sunset together.

Did a lot of work, technology transfer for various countries, the U.N. (indiscernible) in my life. And it is pretty obvious that this is an important thing to complete and make whole. Thank you.

SARMAD HUSSAIN: Sarmad Hussain, ICANN staff.

HARALD ALVESTRAND: Harald Alvestrand, incoming IETF liaison to the board.

KHALED KOUBAA: Khaled Koubaa from Tunisia, previously a member of the Arabic script working group and now a member of the IDN working group on the Board. And universal acceptance is very important for me personally and for my region as well.

DON HOLLANDER: I'm Don Hollander. And for many years I have been working on using ICT as a catalyst for prosperity in developing countries, mostly in the Pacific but other parts, Asia and South America. And the idea that people should be able to use the Internet in their language, in their script with no barriers seems like a reasonable thing to do.

I have a book shop in New Zealand. In New Zealand, we have Maori as one of our official languages. Maori uses macrons. I want to have my

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website, ngapukapuka.nz, be able to be used -- and my email address to be able to be used by everyone in New Zealand. So that's why I'm involved with universal acceptance.

AJAY DATA:

I'm Ajay Data from India. I'm EAI coordinator in UAG group where my focus apart from universal acceptance goes around email address internationalization where we have been successfully able to produce and provide a solution as a group to the world that email address internationalization is possible, which means now you can have an email address on your IDNs. They are not just the domain names. They are working. The guidelines are available. Entire group has worked together.

Apart from that, I'm -- I was a NomCom nominee for ccNSO Council. I got seated today. My term starts after the AGM gets over.

And interestingly, one more thing which is I'm very actively part of Sarmad's IDN program where I'm co-chair for New Brahmi generation panel where we are creating the label generation rules for nine Indian scripts. Eight are completed. One is pending, which is going to be a very interesting time when the new gTLD round opens for new IDNs.

This is going to be a universal acceptance case, much more larger and bigger as soon as this opens. Thank you.

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LARS STEFFEN: I'm Lars Steffen. I'm director international at Eco, Association of the Internet Industry, Europe's largest industry association. I got engaged with UASG because as Rich Merdinger just described, we have got a large number of registries and registrars and they would like to see domain names work all over the world. And this is why our membership asked the Association to get involved in the UASG. And this is why I'm here and co-coordinator of the community outreach group, together with Christian Dawson of the i2Coalition, who is not in the room right now. But we work closely together. Thank you very much.

MARK SVANCAREK: Mark Svancarek, Microsoft Corporation. At Microsoft our mission is to empower every person and organization on the planet to achieve more. That is our actual corporate mission statement. We see universal acceptance as one more aspect of achieving that mission.

JONNE SOININEN: Hello, I'm Jonne Soininen, and I'm the outgoing IETF liaison. And I'm riding to my own sunset because for some reason George excluded me from the sunset of his and Ram's. So I'm not universally accepted yet, I guess.

[ Laughter ]

Which does make sense, yes.

Anyways, I've been part of the IDN -- Board IDN working group for the past five years. Thank you.

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AVRI DORIA: Avri Doria, member of the ICANN Board. But I got interested in this a while back when I briefly had a job that wanted me to care about it. Started getting interested and I sort of followed it at a distance ever since.

WENDY PROFIT: Wendy Profit, ICANN org and support for the board of directors. IDNs are what actually lured me to ICANN almost ten years ago now. I was interested in the idea of all of the different languages and scripts bringing the world together through the Internet. So I'm very excited to see it evolving.

GWEN CARLSON: Hi, everyone, I'm Gwen Carlson on ICANN communications team. And I work with the UASG group which it's a great pleasure. And I'm excited to see all the progress they've made. And I hope you are too.

LISA SAULINO: Lisa Saulino, ICANN org, Board ops.

SARAH DEUTSCH: Hi, Sarah Deutsch, ICANN Board. Very interested in our discussion today. Thanks.

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RAM MOHAN:

Thank you.

Don, let's go through the slides. And what I'd suggest is we go through the initial pieces and then we stop along the way. And if there are any questions or comments or anything, just stop us as we go along rather than waiting for everything to be said because it's unlikely that will happen.

DON HOLLANDER:

Thanks very much. And one of the slides I've asked Edmon if he could help, but he'll see where that is.

So UA in a nutshell is basically the idea that all domain names and all email addresses work in all applications. And if you say it like that and you say it quick enough, you say, well, of course, they do. And in reality, they don't.

So computer programmers are really nice folks. They try to keep things nice and safe. They try to keep their data clean, they're good looking, and they write code to make sure that garbage doesn't go into their application.

And the problem is they're also a little bit lazy so they use code that's been around in some cases for 25 years. And the code that they use is based on plain old wrong assumptions. Standards have been changed through the IETF. 2010 email addresses were allowed to have IDNs in the domain name and nonASCII characters in the mailbox names. And to our colleague from the W3C, we're very keen to get them to get their code and standards up to date as well.

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So this is the idea that that's what universal acceptance is sort of about, just that all domain names work in all applications.

So what's changed? Hopefully this is pretty straightforward. There's more top-level domains. No longer just two or three characters. No longer just in ASCII. List of TLDs is certainly not static. New names are being added, not as rapidly now as they were a couple of years ago. And sometimes names actually disappear from the root zone.

So those are some of the things that have changed. And mailbox names are no longer in ASCII.

So I'll ask Edmon to just go through this slide because his pronunciation will be better than mine.

[ Laughter ]

Edmon, thanks.

EDMON CHUNG:

Sure. I guess this is about the different types of email addresses in terms of how it connects with the IDN part, the internationalized domain name part, and also the username part. So it is possible to have it fully in IDN. And I guess you wanted me to try to read that.

I'll read it in my mother tongue. It's (speaking non-English language). Actually, I don't know how to read the dash.

[ Laughter ]

(speaking non-English language)



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It's not actually quite fun because the "at" is the same. And in Hong Kong you would say dash as probably hyphen or dash. But in Mandarin, it would be read at (speaking non-English language). And I actually know how to say it in Mandarin for the dash rather than in Cantonese. But that's the full. But you can also have, of course, the username part in different language and the domain name part in just plain old ASCII and also ASCII in the mailbox name but actually an IDN in the domain name part.

Did I cover what you wanted me to?

DON HOLLANDER:

Thank you very much. So there are five verbs to universal acceptance. This is the message that we're getting to developers, system architects. They need to be able to accept all these new names, validate them properly and correctly, store them properly to make sure that their databases are able to support Unicode. That's generally not a problem except for quite old applications. When they're processing, they need to be aware that they're processing Unicode characters in terms of sorting and comparing. And they need to display them properly. So those are our five verbs, and we use those throughout all the documentation and all the presentations that we do.

So universal acceptance is achieved when all domain names and all email addresses work equally, the universal acceptance component, and EAI, email address internationalization, which can include nonASCII characters in the domain name and/or in the mailbox.

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So those of you who have a computer or a phone handy, here a little thing to try. And that's see if you can send a message to this email address. For those who use Apples, you just -- to get the macrons, you just hold the letter key down a little bit longer. For those of you who use PCs, it's just a wee bit trickier.

So this is -- the email address here is korero@ngapukapuka.nz. Pukapuka is "book" in Maori. Nga which is the N-G-A with a bar makes it plural. So this books.nz. And korero is the reader in Maori.

So I'll leave that there while people are trying.

I'd like to just talk about the Universal Acceptance Steering Group. So this was formed almost four years ago. It's been brewing for a little bit -- a little bit of time before that. There are a number of people that would come to ICANN meetings and say somebody needs to do something about that, and everybody was looking for somebody to do something about that.

And Ram and Cyrus Namazi from the ICANN staff said, yeah, somebody should do something and why don't we get a bunch of somebodies who could do something in a room to get them to actually do something. And there was a meeting in Washington, D.C., in January 2015. I think there were people from -- a number of people from the U.S. People from Google. Afilias was there. Edmon from DotAsia was there, VeriSign, Farsight. Probably 15, 20 people. And it was -- it was very interesting that really within the first hour, not only did everybody agree that somebody needed to do something, but everybody agreed that those somebodies in that room were the somebodies that needed

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to do something. And the idea of a Universal Acceptance Steering Group, a name got created and a process and a strategy for making it happen.

So ICANN has been very supportive of the work that we're doing. And I hope that people have gotten that email working. And if not, it's on the banner behind us as well.

So we have a group of volunteers and one -- I won't say a cat herder because we tried that at the beginning and it wasn't terribly successful. So one person was responsible for making sure things happen. Ram Mohan is the chair. Edmon, Rich, and Mark are vice chairs, and then we're structured with currently two working groups, one on EAI and one on community outreach. Those are big issues for us. EAI is quite important because if you go to a CIO and you talk to them and their system architecture -- architect, they'll look at their systems and they'll see that email is -- is a bottleneck. And until they get a bottleneck solved, then they have no interest in solving anything else.

Well, yesterday there was an announcement from Microsoft that Microsoft Exchange 2019 has been shipped, is shipped, and it is now able to send to and receive from EAI addresses. That's a big, big deal in the corporate world.

In the open source world, Postfix is supposed to have been EAI ready for some time. Exim is also EAI ready. We're actually running an evaluation to actually test those claims.

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We've got about 310 now participants from more than 171 organizations and that's from -- there were about 15 people when we started. And a year in there were about 120.

We get fantastic support from ICANN. We get not just financial support, which is always nice, but we get great staff -- great support from the staff and some people on the board. So Ram puts a huge amount of effort in, and we're very appreciative of that. Michaela, who runs the global support center, she's great and her team are very involved in supporting us. Gwen Carlson -- Gwen, close your ears for a moment. She is just magic, a joy to work with and very helpful in getting our strategy done. Cyrus Namazi has been a strong supporter of this for a long time. And they and their teams are very helpful. And in the past year we've started to engage with the GSE teams to use them to reach out to -- through their channels into the rest of the world.

So here's just a fun little -- this is my -- my poster board of who the people in the UASG are. They're from all over the world. Some of those faces will be familiar and some of them may not be. But there's quite a large number of people who are helping, either voluntarily or by forced servitude.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Off microphone).

DON HOLLANDER: Yes, sir.

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DANIEL DARDAILLER: Usually a steering group or steering committee, they are quite small, but you said you had more than 300 people. So do you have like a smaller, like a leader group?

RAM MOHAN: Yeah. A couple of slides earlier, Daniel, we were showing there's -- you look at the office bearers, if you will. There is a chair and three vice chairs. Then we have two -- we have two focus areas, and there are coordinators for those focus areas. So that kind of is a smaller group.

So we started this off as this may be just a nomenclature thing. In 2000 -- four years ago when we started -- '14 when we started this off it was just 10, 12 of us and we said, okay, we're going to be the steering group and let's get this going. And then we started to talk about it, and we came to a ICANN group and spoke about it and that mailing list grew from, if I'm right, from about 15 to about 70 and then it grew to 200. And by that time, the name had already been baked in. So that's what you're seeing.

DON HOLLANDER: Thanks, Ram. So that's who -- that's sort of the concepts of it. That's who we are and how big an issue is it. If you say it really quick, it's -- it's that easy. It's all -- but in reality, it's not. So we ran a test last year where we took the top thousand websites of the world and tried to register -- tried to engage with them with a variety of email addresses. Some -- so an `ascii@newgtld` short, a long one,

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ascii@idnunicode@asciiunicode@idn and arabic.arabic@arabic. So in Arabic the address is on the right-hand side. And of those thousand or so that we did, just 8% accepted all of our email addresses. So that gives you some idea as to how -- how it is. We're just finishing off an evaluation of email addresses -- sorry, social media services also which we'll do linkification so if you type something in Skype or WhatsApp or some -- Facebook, it will -- if they think that it's a domain name, it will create a link. And, no, they don't work particularly well. Telegram -- telegram, telegraph works the best, but some of them don't work terribly well at all. So what we're doing is we're testing these services and then going to reach out to these players to try to get it fixed.

And then we have another project to test email software and services. Just two of the major players are at least partly EAI ready, so that's Gmail and Microsoft. But one of the challenges with EAI email is there's no automatic downgrading. So if you have an EAI address and you send it to a noncompliant email system, it just dies. It does not automatically get -- there's no automatic algorithm that does a conversion. So that's why it's -- it's quite important to get these -- these major players at least able to send to and receive from. The good news is that there is work happening in -- in Tencent, in China, so they've got about a billion email addresses. There's 126.com, 163.com, or the qq.com, all the email providers, so they've each got sort of 900 million or billion email addresses. And they -- other than Tencent they are -- their platform is ready to go. Tencent has a bit of work to do on that. So there is work happening by the major email providers. Sir.

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DANIEL DARDAILLER: Just another question. When you find a problem with UA on a given platform does it mean that there is a population on the planet that cannot use the platform or is it just that the test case in particular has a problem, but can you always match the bug that you find to a population of customer, you know, that is real.

DON HOLLANDER: So I think the answer is, yes, there are real -- or there are certainly potentially real people affected. So today, if you want to use the Internet and you want to use email or some other unique identifier that's only avail -- that's in ASCII, then you have to -- that's what you have to do. But imagine that you're somebody in the highlands of Thailand or rural China or India and you don't recognize these characters at all. It's as if somebody from Kansas ended up in -- in rural -- somebody in Kansas discovers this Internet which happened to be created by the Thais and it's all in Thai language and they're sort of, I want to use this thing but I don't understand the script. Don't understand the script. Does that answer the question?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: (Off microphone).

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Do it offline then.

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DON HOLLANDER:

So the other -- there is some hopeful sign. We're doing an evaluation of open program -- open source programming language libraries to see how ready they are, and so far the ones we tested, none of them passed all our tests. But some of them passed most of the tests and then we've -- we've submitted fixes to the library maintainer to get those fixed.

So who has to fix universal acceptances and isn't it something that ICANN IT could just solve for everybody, and the answer is, no. So every website, every email address, every application that uses an email address or a domain name has to be reviewed and fixed. So it's not a centralized fix. It's more distributed in IPv6 or DNSSEC. Those are both focused very much on a smaller subset of the technical community people who run networks. So this is broader. These are the people who run applications and websites and email systems.

The good news is that the evidence we have is most remediation effort, once it's started, is relatively fixed -- relatively easy and quick. The problem is getting it into a work stream on a CIO's busy pile of work requests.

So is it hard? Generally not hard. Easier if you have a well-established I.T. department that has a data dictionary. In one instance an I.T. shop is pursuing this. They didn't have a data dictionary and they've used this part of their project to make sure that they do have a data dictionary, and they reported the other day that by having this data dictionary -- they've had to do some work to become GDPR compliant and having that data dictionary made that much, much easier.



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The hard part is getting interest to the community and to generating demand for getting things UA ready without generating alarm that these things don't work.

So these are the things that the UASG have done. We've identified target audiences, which are the doers, these are developers and system architects; the directors, so their bosses, the CIOs, people who allocate the work; and influencers, people who -- these would be analysts, journalists, editorial consultants, system integrators sort of companies. We've created a huge amount of documentation from the C-suite to the CIO, to the systems architect, to the developer. We've got some training courses that universities or technical institutes who can teach programming can leverage. We've performed studies. Browsers are pretty okay. There was only one browser that did particularly poorly in our tests and one which scored 100% on everything. And nobody believes that it was actually Internet Explorer that was the best of the lot. We're working to facilitate awareness of the -- awareness and action in the email community. So before we started it was on a few people's radar but because the UASG existed and was corralling email software and service providers around the globe, there's been an opportunity for people to do interoperability testing. And one of the things that I take great, great pleasure in is that when Microsoft was ready to release their product, they actually reached out to the others in the UASG EAI working group to get some test accounts and they -- so that they did test the applications.

We've created a logging facility. So if you go to [uasg.tech](http://uasg.tech) and you have a -- or you encounter a problem, go to [uasg.tech](http://uasg.tech), there's a button and

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you push it and you can create a trouble ticket. And then Michaela Quinzy's team will reach out to the website or the developer and try to get it fixed.

And we've started fixing the open source programming language libraries and utilities, and we're working with ICANN GSE team.

So I was going to just have a slide of gray here listing all of the documentation, and Ram said, nobody is going to read that. So I'll just introduce you to three pieces of documentation that we have. The first is UASG007, that's an introduction to universal acceptance. This is a 70-page fairly technical document aimed at developers and system architects. This is not something a CIO is going to read. It's certainly not something a CEO is going to read. But it -- it's something that these developers who are going to fix the system will understand.

UASG009, and all our documents are numbered and referenced and go through a pretty extensive review process. This is a quick guide to tender and contractual terms. So this -- if you're keen to get your systems that you're purchasing UA ready, there's -- there's some text there that you can put into your tendering document or your contracting document. And we've already seen this happen in the state of Rajasthan in India where they were looking for some software and they included that in -- in that -- in that tendering document and they continue to do that.

And UASG015 is a blueprint for CIOs. So if a CIO wants to do this, and it's a clear and pretty straightforward process that they can use to get their systems UA ready.

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So those are some of the things that we've done, some of the material that we've produced. The financials, this is a contribution from ICANN and this shows the budget that we're -- we're allocated over the past four years and the actual amount, and you can see that -- that we are truly underspent. Part of that is that both Ram and I are frugal and we have no problem spending money but we just want to make sure that we spend it well. So we just -- we are frugal.

So where are we at with universal acceptance? We're nearing the end of the beginning. The documentation is nearly complete. Some of the documentation is currently going through a review after it's been published for several years. We have the one more major study on email underway. Additional sector studies are planned. We're repeating our measurement as to how UA ready is the community. And continuing to work on the programming language libraries and utilities.

And the next bit is how can you help. So we're very keen if you could keep universal acceptance as a strategic board priority and integrate UA into the organizational operational priority. This is within ICANN. When you go out and speak and when ICANN senior management go out and speak, we'd like you to talk about universal acceptance, and we can provide material for that, if you'd like. We have in the past. And we'd really like it if you got your own organizations UA ready. So when you -- when you go home and raise it with your -- with your IT manager and say, are our systems ready, and if they're not, why not, and how can we make them that way. We don't think it should be a big UA readiness project, but we -- we think that it should be part of the system architect's roadmap for development and maintenance. So when an

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application comes in and needs a bug fixed or a minor fix, that they build UA into the -- into the result. As a CIO, getting -- fixing an application is really the easiest bit of it. It's really opening up the application and then -- for a project and closing it down is where the big costs are.

And the next step is read some of these documents, if you want. Subscribe to the UASG discuss list, so UASG.tech/subscribe. It's not an overly busy list, it's sort of bursty from time to time, but not overly busy. Get your own systems UA ready, and please, spread the word. And happy to answer questions or take suggestions on how we can do this even better. Thank you.

DANIEL DARDAILLER:

We have had the opportunity or the chance, I would say, to be backed by legislation that would actually force public websites to be accessible along our guideline because that's the only one that were available.

And I was thinking -- is there any kind of policy development that would force or encourage public websites to be UA compatible along the same idea which is that people paying taxes have to be able to use the service provided by governments.

So that was the first thing that came online for Web accessibility was this reason. People with disability, they pay the same tax. They have to be able to use the same way the Internet. So I'm not sure if it is as popular because Web accessibility was very popular with the legislation. But it looks to me like it's along the same accessibility area.

RAM MOHAN:

Daniel, thank you. This is Ram. We agree with you on that. In the UASG, we have had several conversations on that area. There is work that is just starting to try and drive it. And we're looking to get at least a few jurisdictions, if you will, that will adopt this UA readiness as a procurement policy as well as along the lines of what you're saying.

So we have some work to be done on that. The primary work so far has been in getting the definitions right, getting the base, getting the documentation, all of that base stuff right. Because once we have that, then we can go to governments and regulators and say, You ought to adopt it. But we're just about to enter that phase. And, in fact, we're just about ready to -- in the IGF, for example, to open up a dynamic coalition to start thinking about this as well.

But quite a bit more work needs to be done. I think it will be interesting and perhaps useful from the W3C side to get that experience baked into the UA side as well.

Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG:

I guess just building on that, it's -- it's just starting. And that's -- we believe that's the right direction and the thinking that kind of like Web accessibility. Government procurement processes is one important thing because once they put it in the requirement for tenders, it may not be a requirement at the first place but at least show or answer a question that says: Are you UA ready? And when might you be UA ready

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as one of those questions is important to get the message out actually. Most of the system integrators will need to immediately understand what it is.

But I wanted to emphasize one thing. I think ICANN is starting to do that itself as well. So ICANN -- I don't want to -- I don't know exactly, but I think ICANN has started looking at when it finds its vendors to also include UA as a question on where -- and we're using that particular experience to reach out to governments on it. So...

AJAY DATA:

I was actually about to say that. In Rajasthan, we are as success story as Don told. I am able to push which is going to be likely to be -- I'm not keeping my fingers crossed. But one of these days we're about to release a document -- a vision document about the technology framework which they have in their stack and how it's going to be there. They have formed this document. And this -- I will push this entire recommendation of UA into the document.

So final document is not yet out. But the document -- that draft document already has that g. So if it comes out, then entire country is covered by legislation as you were saying.

RAM MOHAN:

Thanks, Ajay.

Gwen.

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**GWEN CARLSON:** Thanks. I just wanted to confirm that we are starting to put the requirement for UA readiness in our contracts along with IPv6 and I believe DNSSEC as well. And I think we even have language for all of you.

**RAM MOHAN:** Other comments, questions?

**DANIEL DARDAILLER:** I want to just mention that for accessibility, the way we've done it is by only pushing for public websites, websites paid by public money. But the side effect of that is that the industry doesn't care if it's making a website for a public agency or for a private company. So in the end, everybody progress because there are only one set of developers.

**RAM MOHAN:** Maarten, then Edmon.

**MAARTEN BOTTERMAN:** Just from me to express my appreciation for this briefing session and also see Microsoft here Worldwide Web Consortium because this is clearly something ICANN cannot do alone and is broader than that.

And for me, I just -- just to share that I've been very well able to rely on the support from Sarmad and his colleagues to prepare for saying useful things during workshops when asked to and normally receive very good response to that.

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RAM MOHAN: Thank you, Maarten.

Edmon.

EDMON CHUNG: So just want to build on what Gwen mentioned, is it's alongside IPv6 and DNSSEC and universal acceptance. And I'm hoping that the ICANN Board takes it at kind of a strategic level. As, I guess, executives and ICANN Board speak, you already talk about DNSSEC at a pretty high profile, especially with the KSK rollover that happened. You already talk about IPv6. I know sometimes you also talk about universal acceptance but it seems that it is slightly less than the other two.

And I think hopefully, you know -- I guess part of this group hopes that it would be at least at par with the other two.

And one of the reasons why is -- I guess what's nice about DNSSEC is the also the opportunity strategically to reach out to governments and to make sure they hear ICANN's view and ICANN is doing a good job and going out to tell the governments that it is relevant to them to push it down as well. And UA presents that opportunity as well.

Many governments fought at ICANN to -- for ICANN to release those IDN ccTLDs. Now ICANN can go back and say, look, the organization is this far down the road, how's your government doing. And that -- that is very strong. That's strategically important for UA to become a reality.



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So I think it has a kind of strategic value to ICANN and hopefully it gets -- the profile gets raised.

RAM MOHAN:

Other comments from Board members? Akinori.

AKINORI MAEMURA:

Thank you very much. I have a couple of points to share with you. First of all, I -- I would like to start with appreciation for the UASG members with quite continued effort for promoting the universal acceptance to the community and the industry. And that's really beautiful scenario, one of the most beautiful scenario of ICANN's activity that this kind of promotion was community led. Then it is successfully driven until now. That's the first point.

The second point, I am agreeing that, Edmon, you made a really great point. In IPv6 and DNSSEC, they are -- ICANN's quite high priority for the recent years. And then universal acceptance is another thing, as you said.

And then actually the ICANN -- ICANN is setting forth such a policy and readiness for the IDN, for example.

And then another point is the new g -- a lot of new gTLDs are still not recognized by the software. And that's another aspect of the UA. But IDN is the main portion of the problem which still needs to be solved.

So, yes, that's very good points. You made a really good point. And it's really good for ICANN at the strategic level, which is where we are

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involved, to consider and take further step to do something, to do something and accelerating the promotion of the universal acceptance.

One of the news is I am -- this is almost one year for me to serve as the IDN working group chair. And then IDN working group is now renaming into the IDN universal acceptance working group, which shows some intention at the Board level to getting -- getting -- get more and more focus on universal acceptance.

Still the consideration is really beginning level, how we can -- we actually practically putting effort on to the UA area. But that's -- at least it shows our attitude on to the universal acceptance.

And really I want to ask you for the continued cooperation with the Board level and ICANN org and ask you for also the continued effort for the Universal Acceptance Steering Group. Thank you very much.

RAM MOHAN:

Thank you, Akinori.

Sarah.

SARAH DEUTSCH:

Yes. I just wanted to express appreciation for this fantastic initiative. I had a very quick question and apologize because Avri and I have another meeting we're going to have to go find and attend in a few seconds.

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But I wondered whether there was any overlap and outreach to some of the same people who had worked on the Marrakech treaty for the visually impaired? Because one of -- it deals with content but it requires the contracting member states to have exceptions for visually impaired and to allow the import of accessible format copies under certain conditions. And this group would seem like a natural ally to having the domain name piece of this as well.

DON HOLLANDER: It's on the list now. Thank you.

RAM MOHAN: Other comments? Other questions? Is there anything else? Don.

DON HOLLANDER: So just in terms of the accessibility issue, we've talked about that a couple of times. And we ran a community workshop in Hong Kong in January. And one of the take-aways from that was from one of the local community leaders who was involved in the Hong Kong accessibility. He said this sounds like that's where it belongs, and he said he would work to get it into the list. It takes some time to get it through that whole process. But we're aware of that as an idea.

RAM MOHAN: Edmon.

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EDMON CHUNG: I quickly looked up Marrakech treaty, as you walk out the room. I think it's very interesting.

UA probably doesn't directly have but there will probably be overlaps. And the direction perhaps is in sustainable development goals. We have identified a number of SDGs that actually fit into part of UA. And that might be the direction to engage those people with that kind of SDGs in mind. That's a good idea.

RAM MOHAN: Thank you very much.

Khaled.

KHALED KOUBAA: So, first of all, thank you, Don, and UASG members for this presentation and for reaching out to the Board. As a member of the IDN working group, I'm so happy that we are having this interaction.

My question, apart from this meeting with the Board: Have you any interaction with the ICANN community? I mean, are you presenting as UASG?

DON HOLLANDER: So yes is the short answer. We don't force ourselves on each of the communities at every meeting because having been on the other side, if they keep seeing you all the time, they get tired of it. But we talk to

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most of the communities once a year, particularly when we have something new and interesting to say.

So we've talked to Tech Day, for example, because that's our target audience, not this time, not last time, but the time before. And I talked to the organizer this afternoon and he said, Why don't you come and tell us something new and interesting at the next meeting in Kobe. And we plan on talking about how you can get your own systems EAI ready. So if you have a home-grown email system, what you have to do. We do that.

We talk to the ccNSO from time to time. We were at the APTLD meeting last month. We talked to the GNSO, to the registries, the registrars. We talked through the DNA, the Eco, the i2Coalition, to the registries and registrar and hosting communities. So we try to talk to everybody regularly but not obnoxiously.

KHALED KOUBAA:

Thank you. That was my expectation as well. My intention was as well to look at the -- not only to reach to the constituency themselves but also look at the policy being developed or discussed within the community and look at maybe where we can introduce the notions and principles of UA in those policies.

I'm not thinking about any one of them, but probably this would be a path to go.

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DON HOLLANDER: So to be fair and blunt, the ICANN community is the least of my worries actually. I am much more interested in getting the more global software development, the open source software communities, the people who are doing Web development, programming languages. That's -- the ICANN community, I think, understands universal acceptance, and they know about the tools available. But it's the rest of the world that I'm particularly keen to get.

RAM MOHAN: Thanks, Don.  
  
Rich.

RICH MERDINGER: Thank you, Ram. Rich Merdinger here.  
  
One of the things that occurred to Edmon and me as we are sitting rudely chatting while you were discussing that, Don, is one that of the challenges we have when we want to bring this topic to the community is that we end up trying to schedule time so we can hold sessions when there's competition for time and rooms and things of that nature. We have been very accommodated.

The issue is we don't always -- as we all know, we end up with people missing from meetings because they have got competing priorities, et cetera.

And while it may have been discussed before, we would within the working group think about having a booth maybe in Kobe so we can get

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people during their downtime while walking through and get that going.

That was mainly Edmon, but he said he talked too much already. So I would bring it up. I think that's something we ought to consider.

It was both of us.

RAM MOHAN: Thank you very much. This is the -- we're trying this on for the first time. We're trying something new because so far, the UASG as a community initiative, something that started and something that has kind of blossomed inside of the ICANN environment, it's kind of interesting to see the -- that progression from something that was important to the community that became a priority in the community that got funding from ICANN but also outreach inside of this and other communities. It's gratifying to see that it's now making it into Board priorities as Akinori was saying.

Sorry? Strategic plan, things like that. So that's really gratifying to see.

And, Akinori, thank you very much.

And it's also great to see that the Board working group on IDNs, which had been the driving force, if you will, in terms of ensuring that from the ICANN org point of view that we are continuing focus on that area, I think it's also another good sign to see that it's expanding its charter to add universal acceptance. So appreciate it.

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And if you find this briefing useful and if you find the content useful and the structure useful, invite the UASG back. We'd be happy to brief you. This one -- you know, I was able to leverage my dual hat role. But going forward, it's up to you.

AKINORI MAEMURA:

Thank you very much, Ram.

This is very -- you said this is a trial. But this is very good -- a good thing to have.

Now I am -- we are missing Ram at the Board member. But we're really happy to have Ram Mohan as the UASG chair forever. Thank you.

RAM MOHAN:

No, another few months and then I step down as UASG chair.

[ Laughter ]

George.

GEORGE SADOWSKY:

Yeah, thank you, Ram.

Well, I just want to add my expression of appreciation. And I'm sure that all the Board members who aren't here are equally enthusiastic. This is a joy of a project. It's got such nice elements in it. It's socially highly useful. It adds to the economic development of certainly minority language folks. It has technical challenges which are not



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overwhelming but are not trivial. And any benefits that come from this last as long as the planet lasts.

Thank you.

RAM MOHAN: Thank you very much. We're adjourned.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPTION]**